

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-08 ACDA-07 /074 W
-----051746Z 069081 /44

R 051525Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3809
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 5616

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: POLITICAL PARTIES JOCKEY FOR POSITION

1. AS POLITICAL LIFE WINDS DOWN FOR THE TRADITIONAL EASTER BREAK, THERE HAS BEEN A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY BY THE INDIVIDUAL PARTIES, EACH JOCKEYING FOR POSTION IN ANTICIPATION OF THE POLITICAL MANEUVERING THAT IS ANTICIPATED WHEN THE POLITICIANS RETURN TO ROME. GIVEN THE POLITICAL TENSIONS WHICH ARE BOILING BENEATH THE SURFACE, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE EASTER RESPITE WILL BE OF SHORT DURATION.

2. THE CHRISITAN DEMOCRATS (DC) CONCLUDED THEIR LONG-DELYED FOUR-DAY ORGANIZATION CONFERENCE ON SUNDAY AFTER HEARING A SPEECH BY PARTY SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI. (HE INTERRUPTED HIS CONVALESCENCE TO TRAVEL TO ROME FOR THE SPEECH.) AS WAS TO BE EXPECTED, THE CONFERENCE TURNED MORE INTO A POLITICAL EVENT THAN INTO A DISCUSSION OF PROPOSALS FOR REFORM OF THE PARTY APPARATUS. THE DEBATE AT THE CONFERENCE CONFIRMED THAT
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THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE DC REMAINS FIRMLY OPPOSED TO ANY TYPE OF POLITICAL ACCORD WITH THE COMMUNISTS (CPI), ALTHOUGH THERE IS BROAD SUPPORT FOR PARTY PRESIDENT MORO'S IDEA OF A PROGRAMMATIC CONVERGENCE BETWEEN THE VARIOUS POLITICAL FORCES.

3. THE MAJOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCLUDING PHASE OF THE

CONFERENCE WAS ZACCAGNINI'S WORKS OF SUPPORT FOR THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT. GIVEN THE FACT THAT MORO'S HAND WAS PROBABLY BEHIND THE ENDORSEMENT, THE POSITION OF ANDREOTTI VIS-A-VIS HIS OWN POLITICAL PARTY HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY STRENGTHENED AT A TIME WHEN MANY DC LEADERS HAD BEEN TAKING THEIR DISTANCE FROM ANDREOTTI AND HIS GOVERNMENT. SPECIFICALLY, ZACCAGNINI SAID THAT THE DC WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE IN ORDER THAT "THE GOVERNMENT OF OUR FRIEND ANDREOTTI HAS THE WIDEST POSSIBLE SUPPORT." WITH ZACCAGNINI GIVING ANDREOTTI THE GREEN LIGHT TO LEAD THE NEXT POLITICAL ERA AFTER THAT OF THE "UNAGREED ABSTENSIONS", ANDREOTTI INDICATED HIS COMPLETE WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THIS TASK.

4. THE DEBATE REVEALED THAT THERE IS AN ELEMENT IN THE PARTY THAT BELIEVES THE ONLY MEANS TO ATTACKING THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTRY IS TO INVOLVE DIRECTLY THE COMMUNISTS IN THE PROCESS. AGRICULTURE MINISTER MARCORA, A LEADER OF THE LEFT-WING BASE FACTION OF THE DC, TOOK THIS LINE DURING THE DEBATE. HIS POSITION WAS SHARPLY ATTACKED BY INDUSTRY MINISTER DONAT-CATTIN OF THE LEFT-WING FORZA NUOVA FACTION AND BY MILAN PROVINCIAL SECRETARY MAZZOTTA, BOTH OF WHOM ARGUED THAT THE DC SHOULD GO INTO OPPOSITION BEFORE MAKING ANY TYPE OF DEAL WITH THE PCI.

5. GIVEN THE POLITICAL NATURE OF THE DEBATE, QUESTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL REFORM OF THE PARTY RECEIVED LITTLE ATTENTION AND WERE DEALT WITH BY A SERIES OF CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMISSIONS. THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED AT A MEETING OF THE DC'S NATIONAL COUNCIL NOW SCHEDULED FOR MAY WHICH WILL ALSO ELECT A NEW PARTY DIRECTORATE.

6. FOR THE COMMUNISTS, BERLINGUER RETURNED TO THE POLITICAL SCENE WITH A LEAD ARTICLE IN L'UNITA OF APRIL 3. PURSUING THE LINE ENUNCIATED IN THE PCI DIRECTORATE'S DOCUMENT OF MARCH 31 (ROME 5470), BERLINGUER NOTED THE URGENT NEED FOR A POLITICAL CHANGE (SVOLTA POLITICA) IN THE NEAR TERM. FOR BERLINGUER, A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD, AS THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS FORESEE IT, IS INSUFFICIENT AND MUST BE LINKED WITH A POLITICAL ACCORD. WHILE THE PCI WOULD CONSIDER A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD "A STEP FORWARD", BERLINGUER STRESSED THAT IT MUST BE CLEAR THAT IN THE END THIS WILL NOT BE SUFFICIENT AND THAT THE POLITICAL FRAMEWORK MUST BE CHANGED. ACCORDING TO BERLINGUER, "IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE A SHIFT, THE GREATEST POSSIBLE, OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE

PARTIES AND BETWEEN THE PARTIES AND THE GOVERNMENT.
COMMENT. BERLINGUER'S ARTICLE REPRESENT YET ANOTHER
PCI OPERATION TO KEEP UP THE PRESSURE ON THE DC IN AN
EFFORT TO BREAK DOWN ITS RESISTANCE TO ANY
GOVERNING ARRANGEMENT WITH THE COMMUNISTS. (WE
UNDERSTAND THAT BERLINGUER AGONIZED OVER THE WORDING
OF THE ARTICLE AND THAT HE WAS UNDER PRESSURE FROM
SOME ELEMENTS OF THE PARTY TO MAKE IT EVEN STRONGER.)

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 5616

7. AT A REPUBLICAN (PRI) NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING,
PARTY SECRETARY LA MALFA RENEWED HIS APPEAL TO THE
COMMUNISTS TO COOPERATE IN SEEKING TO RESOLVE THE
NATION'S ECONOMIC ILLS EVEN BEFORE THEY ENTER THE
GOVERNMENT, AN EVENT WHICH LA MALFA INDICATES IS
VISTUALLY INEVITABLE. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, HE
ARGUED THAT THE COMMUNISTS SHOULD BE CALLED UPON NOW
TO LEND THEIR WEIGHT TO THE ESSENTIAL ECONOMIC MOVES
WHICH MUST BE MADE, AND HE NOTED THAT A PROGRAMMATIC
AGREEMENT WILL NECESSARILY LEAD TO POLITICAL CONSE-
QUENCES. LA MALFA WAS CONTESTED BY PRI DEPUTY BUCA-
LOSSI WHO ARGUES THAT THE PRI IS FOLLOWING THE WORNG
ROAD IN POINTING TO A HISTORIC COMPROMISE SINCE THIS

IS A SOLUTION WHICH DOES NOT HAVE A DEMOCRATIC LOGIC. BUCALOSSI VOTED AGAINST THE FINAL DOCUMENT APPROVED AT THE NATIONAL COUNCIL WHICH INSISTED ON "THE PRIOTIY FOR A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD" FROM WHICH NECESSARY POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES WOULD FOLLOW.

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8. AT A CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (PSDI) ECHOED THE OPINION OF SOME OF THE OTHER PARTIES THAT THE CURRENT MONOCOLORE IS NOT UP TO THE TASK WHICH CONFORNTS IT. NEVERTHELESS, THEY ARE MORE PRUDENT THAN THE REPUBLICANS IN CALLING FOR CLOSE TIES WITH THE COMMUNISTS. THE POLITICAL DOCUMENT ADOPTED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING URGED (PSDI AND SOCIALISTS) AND STRESSED THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO PROCEED SO AS TO AVOID "TRAUMATIC RUPTURES AND THE RISK OF NEW ELECTIONS."

9. FINALLY, THE SOCIALISTS (PSI) HAVE BEGUN PREPARATIONS FOR A NEW ROUND OF BILATERAL TALKS WITH THE VARIOUS PARTIES WITH THE AIM OF PRESSURING THE DC TO DO WHAT IS HAS REFUSE TO DO UNTIL NOW, I.E. TO ACCEPT A POLITICAL ACCORD WITH THE FORCES OF THE LEFT. WITH THIS OBJECTIVE IN MIND, THE PSI LEADERSHIP SENT TO THE OTHER PARIES A TWENTY-PAGE DOCUMENT WPCH IS DESIGNED TO SERVE NOT ONLY AS THE BASIS FOR PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD BUT ALSO AS THE STARTING POINT FOR A SHIFT IN THE GOVERNING FORMULA OF THE COUNTRY. GARDNER

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